

Green Communities 2014 Competitive Grant Question and Answer Forum

Q1: In the Competitive GC Grant Application, how does a town show the ROI for a new energy efficient HVAC system that the town would like to install in a newly constructed building? What is the comparison point? Would it be to compare the energy use of 1) the HVAC unit the town would have installed if they did not use the GC grant funding to the 2) the energy efficient HVAC unit the town would like to install with the GC grant funding?

A1: The new HVAC system in the newly constructed building should be compared to a code compliant unit.

Q2: Our town purchased a church that will be renovated into the new town library in FY15. The old library building will continue to be used as administration offices and will stay in the MEI baseline. We cannot add the church building to the town's baseline, because it was purchased after the baseline year. The building could be tracked separately on MEI from the town baseline, however it's not occupied, so the energy data from the building is not reflective of what the actual energy use would be if the building was occupied. 1) Is the building eligible for the GC competitive grant round? 2) If yes, what information would you need to show that there would be energy savings from the proposed projects? The town knows the square footage of the building and the hours that the new library would be in operation. Using this information, should we estimate what the present annual energy usage of the building would be with the current building equipment (old furnace etc) and compare it to the estimated annual energy usage with the proposed energy efficient equipment (new energy efficient furnace etc) to show the estimated annual energy savings?

A2: Yes, this building is eligible for the Competitive Grant Program. Ineligible buildings are those that will not be tracked by the town, such as a regional school district that was not included as part of the Green Communities designation application. Regarding the information needed to show realistic present annual usage and subsequent energy savings from proposed measures, we do not have any specific requirements other than that the information should be developed by a qualified energy professional with an explanation and justification for how the data was determined.

Q3: Can we submit a proposal for more than \$250K? The energy committee understands that the grants will be very competitive this year and wanted to give DOER some extra projects in case any are removed for some reason.

A3: No. The maximum request allowed is \$250K.

Q4: We are getting a ton of heat loss around and through the old windows on our Town Hall so I'd like to know if replacement of the windows would qualify for granting funding under air sealing or something similar?

A4: New windows are not eligible for funding under the competitive grant program.

Q5: Our request will consist of several measures within one school. Most of the info related to "attachment B" is the same, e.g.,:

Provide a description of the applicant and the project team and its qualifications for completing the project, including all identified partners, contractors, and any technical service providers.

- Identify the specific roles and responsibilities of each of the parties.
- Identify how the project will be managed on a day-to-day basis.

Does the town need to submit a separate "Attachment B" for each and every measure? Or can it be consolidated into one document?

A5: It can be consolidated into one document. For the information that is not the same, the information should be clearly delineated for each measure.

Q6: Our town would like to apply for the GC Competitive Grant 2014. We currently have grant money for the Owner's Agent Technical Assistance and are awaiting a decision on the Energy Managers Grant application. We do not have any GC Competitive or Designation Grant money outstanding.

Can you verify that the Town is eligible to apply for the upcoming GC Competitive Grant Program?

A6: Yes, your town is eligible to apply for the Competitive Grant program. Only Green Communities designation grants or previously awarded competitive grants must be complete before applying for the current GC Competitive Grant program.

Q7: We are wondering if a lighting control system, to tie in with a pre-existing Energy Management System in one of our buildings is eligible under this year's DOER Competitive Grant # PON-ENE-2014-019. It is our understanding that Newburyport had a similar project that was funded last year.

A7: Lighting controls, exclusive of interior lighting, are eligible under the Competitive Grant program.

Q8: Are there any restrictions or guidelines for an oil to gas conversion at a school? Here in Gloucester our intention to apply for grant money to convert oil burners to gas for our Middle School. We plan on either replacing the boilers or retrofitting the existing boilers, depending on the cost. The gas conversion would yield a significant energy reductions for the City.

A8: Conversion from oil to gas is eligible under the Competitive Grant program. The project will be evaluated based on, among other things, the annual energy savings gained as a result of the new system installed.

Q9: The project that we are requesting grant monies for was on the 1st round of the 2012 - 2013 Energy Audit done by Johnson Controls, Inc., the 2 Rooftop Units were originally considered for replacement as part of the Energy Saving Performance Contract (ESPC). Johnson Controls did a payback analysis and this measure did not warrant inclusion in the overall project. The 2 Rooftop Units were abandoned from the ESPC.

I just want to verify that you will not need a copy of the audit with the grant application as this project was removed from the ESPC?

A9: On page 8 of the application, for Energy Efficiency measures it notes to attach the audit recommending the measure. If the measure is not recommended in an audit, then the applicant must provide technical information to support why this measure should be implemented.

Q10: To what extent does a payback period longer than 5 years negatively count against a given project in our application?

A10: There is no threshold payback period that is acceptable or not acceptable. The payback period is one of the factors that will be considered when evaluating a project for funding.

Q11: Does Distributed Power Management software to power down server equipment during periods of low demand qualify in this grant round?

Q12: No

Q13: What is your projected timetable for announcing awards of the 2014 GC competitive grants. Do you expect it will be before June 30, 2014?

Q14: Yes, before June 30th. It will probably not be much earlier than June 30th, but definitely want to get them announced by then.

Q15: Can you email me the Grant Application Table in EXCEL format so I can fill it in? The Table included in the Grant application package is in pdf form.

A15: Once you are invited to the online workspace you will have access to the Excel version in the online instructions tab.

Q16: National Grid has a rebate option called Pay for Performance that provides an incentive to use data monitoring and retro-commissioning to identify low and no-cost adjustments that reduce energy use. The utility provides a rebate based on documented kWh and therms saved ("\$.075 per first year kWh savings and \$.75 per therm saved for low cost/not cost measures").

My question is, since the city can not specify what rebate we would ultimately get until we implement the project (and document what savings we get), how should we account for this potential, but not guaranteed, rebate in the grant proposal's project budget?

A16: An estimate of energy savings for the project and the basis for determining that estimate should be provided. Based on the estimated energy savings, an estimated rebate from the utility should be provided with the basis for that estimate.

Q17: The following is a list of projects to potentially be included in our 2014 Green Communities grant application: Replace existing boiler with high efficiency unit; replace window HVAC with high efficiency unit; Replace attic HVAC with high efficiency unit; install waste oil fueled heater; install steam traps; install split system HVAC unit for server room; install high efficiency transformers. We would appreciate if you would let us know if any of these do not qualify for Green Communities assistance.

A17: The items on your list that deal with HVAC systems, including boilers, are all eligible, see Attachment A of the application. In addition, the steam traps and premium efficiency transformers are eligible. Waste-oil fueled heaters are not eligible.

Q18: The grant Instructions note that up to 10% of requested funds can be for administration – We are submitting a grant application with four projects. Do we need to break down administrative time amongst the four projects? or can we just note in the grant narratives that a total of \$XXX is being requested for administration of all projects under the GCG? If so, should we enter “Administration” as a separate task on the Excell spread sheet to ensure the spreadsheet shows all funds we are requesting?

A18: You do not need to break down the 10% Administrative costs across the individual projects, a lump sum noted in the grant narrative is fine. And yes, you should include "Administration" as a separate item in the Excel spreadsheet.